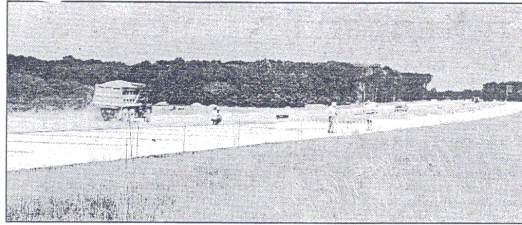


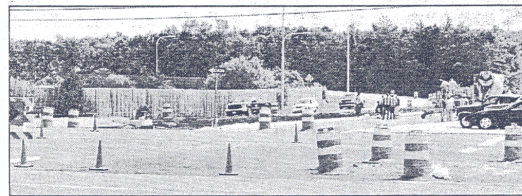
Sun-Times, Wednesday, June 5, 2002

Southbound Route 13 exit ramp north of Smyrna to be closed

Traffic will be diverted to Route 1



Work on the concrete surface of Route 1 continues just north of Smyrna, pictured here looking north towards Black Diamond Road from the construction site on southbound Route 13 just south of Helen's Sausage House. The road is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2003. (Photos by Ben Mace)



As part of the changes that will occur when the southbound Route 13 exit ramp is closed next week, crews are widening the turn lanes at the bottom of the exit from Route 1 near the Smyrna Rest Area and the Amoco station. Southbound drivers won't be able to take the usually Route 13 exit ramp to get to Smyrna, but they can exit about a quarter mile south at this ramp off of Route 1.

by Ben Mace
editor

Southbound Route 13 traffic will be diverted onto Route 1 north of Smyrna next week, and some local businesses are concerned that will mean lost customers.

The Delaware Department of Transportation announced the change at a meeting at the construction trailers on southbound Route 13 just south of Black Diamond Road on May 30. Several local business owners attended, along with representatives from the Smyrna School District and the Smyrna Main Street Association.

June 10 is scheduled as the date when the southbound Route 13 exit ramp will be closed just north of the Smyrna Rest Area and Amoco. Now, that location is where southbound Route 1 splits off from Route 13, but to stay on southbound Route 13 drivers actually have to take the curving exit ramp.

When the Route 13 exit is closed, all southbound traffic will have to travel on Route 1. Drivers will have the chance to take an exit about a quarter mile south that leads back to Route 13 near the Rest Area and the Amoco station, or continue to the south Smyrna exit near Food Lion. Either way will be toll-free.

"As we start preparing to connect the concrete roadway of Route 1, we'll have to close that ramp," said DelDOT's David Duke who is the project manager for this final phase of the Smyrna Odessa section of Route 1.

To handle the extra traffic at the Route 1 exit at the Rest Area and Amoco, two left turn lanes will be added. That work is going on now.

Sandy Margist, owner of the Smyrna Diner, asked if signs on Route 1 directing traffic back to Route 13 would also be part of the changes.

"The last time Route 13 was closed and people had to use Route 1, there was some confusion," she said. "People thought they couldn't get off on Route 13 and go through Smyrna. There was about a three-week period when business was way off before people found out."

Duke said, DelDOT will put up signs to direct people to use that first exit to get to the businesses along Route 13 in Smyrna.

After the meeting, Margist said she was glad to hear about the signs, but she's still concerned about potential customers driving around Smyrna on Route 1.

"I'm sure business will be off until people get acclimated to the change," she said.

The ramp will be closed permanently, and Route 13 won't be reconnected until May 2003 as the Route 1 project nears completion.